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1800 at Ecumenical Youth Assembly

(Lausanne, Switzerland) - About 1800 delegates attending the first European Ecumenical Youth Assembly in Lausanne, Switzerland, were challenged to make the Church relevant to the world today.

Dr.W.A.Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, was the keynote speaker at the opening session Wednesday, July 13, at the Palais de Beaulieu, scene of many international conferences. He told delegates that "Christians are people who are sent into the world. And how shall they perform their mission unless they seek to know the world?"

President Max Petitpierre of Switzerland welcomed the young people who are attending one of the largest and most representative postwar gatherings of European Christian youth. They also heard greetings from the president of the Swiss Protestant Federation, Professor Henri d'Espine, Geneva.

The 12-day meeting is sponsored by the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches in cooperation with national ecumenical youth councils in Europe. In addition to about 1400 European youth from 15 nations, including the USSR, there are visitors from Asia, Australia, Africa, the Middle East, and North and South America.

The theme for the assembly is "Jesus Christ, the Light of the World", the same as that of the 1961 assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held in New Delhi, India.

In the opening address Dr.Visser 't Hooft said that Europe finds it difficult to adjust to a new world which does not regard it as the centre of the universe.

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While some Europeans cling to the old pattern and refuse to accept the fact that times have changed, others come to the conclusion that Europe no longer has a role to play, the speaker observed. "Only a few seek to create a **new** image of Europe and to discover how it may perform its world task in a different way."

Dr. Visser 't Hooft said that the deepest reason for Europe's uncertainty and frustration is "that we have become spiritually uprooted and the life and culture of Europe as a whole are no longer conditioned by Christian conviction."

In one large part of Europe "a non-Christian ideology seeks to penetrate the whole of human existence" while in the other lip service is paid to Christian values but "the decisive forces shaping common life are secular", he said.

The attitude of "let's make the best of a bad job" is more typical of European civilisation than any "strong faith in a God-given destiny", according to Dr. Visser 't Hooft.

Referring to the deep division of Europe, he warned against both "the mistake of minimizing the real issues which have to be faced in the confrontation of Eastern and Western Europe and the mistake of making these issues all important."

"God is not on the side of one part of Europe against the other. God is the judge and saviour of both", he asserted.

Despite the fact that "Christianity has been more cynically betrayed in Europe than anywhere else", it is also the continent where many of the purest renewals of Christian faith have taken place, "some of them in our own time", he said.

He mentioned "the stirring among the laity who discover their task as ambassadors for Christ in the world", the return of fundamental religious themes in modern literature and art, and a turning to the Bible "as the book of real life".

"God has not said his last word in and about Europe", he declared.

In addition to the Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox youth officially participating in the assembly, a number of Roman Catholic youth are present as observers. Catholic Action in French-speaking Switzerland has asked its members to pray for the assembly.

Roman Catholic Bishop François Charrière of Geneva and Fribourg issued a message in which he said the Roman Catholic Church does not belong to the World Council of Churches, yet it "nevertheless teaches that all humble and sincere efforts aiming at reconciliation of all Christians are the work of the Holy Spirit". (See also EPS page 8).

The Catholic population of Lausanne was asked by the Roman Catholic prelate to attend a **special** mass celebrated in the Church of Our lady on July 13 "to invoke God's blessing on the work of the assembly."

The bishop's message said the Lausanne Assembly "gives us encouragement for two reasons". One is that "these are young people who come together to contribute to Christian unity" and when youth are enthusiastic about a great cause "we should all be wrong to despair about the future". The other reason is that the assembly theme is centered not on secondary questions "but on the central mystery of Christianity".

EPS, Geneva

Niles and Graham at Bossey

(Geneva) - Evangelist Billy Graham has told a World Council of Churches sponsored consultation that a return to "dynamic, vital New Testament evangelism" is the solution to the problem of "an anaemic Christianity and a loss of spiritual strength on the part of the churches".

"I am equally convinced", Dr. Graham declared, "that the Gospel of Christ is the only answer to the rising tide of atheistic dialectical materialism."

Dr. Graham addressed some 50 evangelism executives, missionaries and other church leaders convened from around the world for a five-day Consultation on Evangelism (July 6-11) at the WCC's Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva. The theme of the conference was "The Relation of Revival Within the Church and the Communication of the Gospel to the Outsider".

Dr. Graham called upon the churches everywhere to join in a mass evangelistic effort to bring Christ's message to all men in this "crisis hour of world history".

He said that although he recognized the "dangers involved" in mass evangelism, he felt it could provide the basis for a united effort in which "the churches will cooperate and labour together harmoniously and with great zeal".

"I believe it is possible in mass evangelism to reach a 'depth of ecumenism' that is more significant in some ways even than organizational ecumenism", Dr. Graham said.

In another session Dr. D.T. Niles, of Ceylon, general secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference, described the primary evangelistic task of the Church as making evident the uniqueness of the Gospel.

Unless the churches' evangelism programmes point to the three major "Christian differentia", they will have failed in their task, he declared.

Dr. Niles listed as the major distinguishing facts of Christianity:

1. Christianity is the only religion which worships a Risen Lord. While other religions believe that God has entered into the world to help man at various times, Christianity is the only religion which believes that God became man, and that He is involved in a continuing ministry in human history.
2. Christianity is the only religion which believes in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is also a continuing ministry to make God manifest in the world.
3. Christianity is the only religion which believes there is "an end, in which God will complete history". Dr. Niles described the Christian community as "a group of people who represent that which has not yet happened, but will happen."

Chairman for the seven day meeting was the Rev. Tom Allan, Glasgow, Scotland. Participants came from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Japan, Lebanon, Egypt, Kenya, Liberia, Cuba, Uruguay and the United States.

EPS, Geneva

WCC Official Named to Chicago Post

(Chicago) - Dr. Edgar H.S. Chandler of Geneva, associate director of the World Council of Churches' Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, has been elected executive vice-president of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago.

Dr. Chandler, a pastor of the Congregational Christian Churches and former wartime naval chaplain, will assume his new post November 1.

As head of the WCC's refugee work for the past ten years Dr.Chandler directed the resettlement of some 200,000 refugees. He is president of the Standing Conference of Voluntary Agencies Working for Refugees and served as co-chairman of the International Committee for World Refugee Year. He is the author of "The High Tower of Refuge", the story of the churches' refugee work.

EPS, Geneva

British Methodism to Make Ghana Church Autonomous

(Liverpool) - The British Methodist Annual Conference unanimously voted to make its missionary church in Ghana autonomous next January. The British Methodists have carried on mission work in Ghana territory since 1835.

The Rev.Philip Potter, head of the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches in Geneva and a West Indian Methodist minister, was named as a secretary for West Africa of the Methodist Missionary Society. Mr.Potter, the first non-European executive of a British missionary society, will start his new work early next year.

A resolution of the Conference condemned the race policies of the South African Government, declaring that "a system based on the irrational concept of inherent racial superiority must inevitably lead to increasing injustice and repression."

Dr.K.A.Busia, former leader of the Ghana opposition now in exile, said that there were also instances of oppression and injustice in newly independent African countries and attacked "a wrong kind of liberalism that seeks to excuse these things when they are practised by Africans and condemn them when they are practised by whites".

EPS, Geneva

US Churches Ask End of Immigration Quotas

(Los Angeles) - The National Council of Churches (USA) has asked the platform committee of the Democratic party to support repeal of the US immigration quota system.

It also has petitioned for restrictions on a Congressional group, the House Committee on Un-American Activities, which it contends has violated basic rights and freedom of citizens; and asked the US Government to provide information on birth control and family planning when requested by less-developed countries.

The recommendations were presented for the NCC by Methodist Bishop Gerald H. Kennedy of Los Angeles. They were based on pronouncements in recent years by the NCC's General Assembly. The platform committee met in Los Angeles last week preliminary to the opening Monday of the Democratic Party's Convention to choose candidates for the US presidency and vice-presidency.

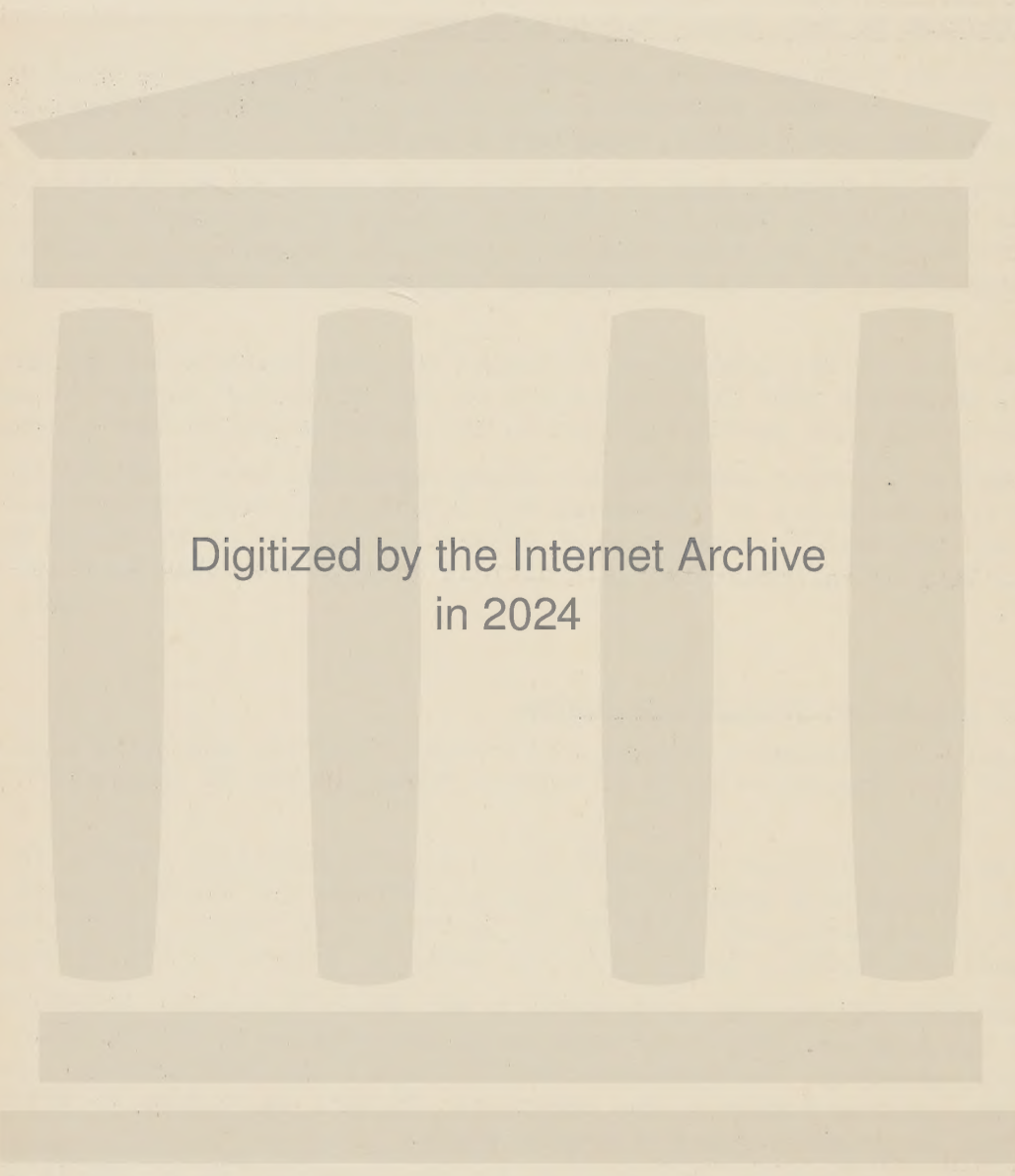
It is expected the NCC will submit a similar petition to the platform committee of the Republican Party when it convenes in advance of its Convention in a few weeks in Chicago.

EPS, Geneva

United States Senate Asked to Recognize Orthodox

(Washington, D.C.) - A resolution requesting public recognition of Eastern Orthodoxy as a "major faith" in the United States has come before the US Senate.

If adopted the move would lead to citation of the Eastern Orthodox Church in addition to "Protestants, Catholics and Jews" in government references to religious bodies.



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Senator Clifford Case of New Jersey, who introduced the resolution, pointed out that Eastern Orthodox adherents in the United States and its dependencies now number 2,545,000 and that "no other among the great world faiths, not now recognized by the government of the United States, has a comparable membership in the United States".

EPS, Geneva

Baptists Urge Disarmament and Test Ban

(Rio de Janeiro) - The Tenth Baptist World Congress meeting in Rio de Janeiro has called for prayers, international disarmament and cessation of nuclear testing as a means towards world peace.

The steps were urged in a pronouncement adopted by 12,500 official delegates from 67 nations at the Congress sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance which represents some 23 million Baptists.

The resolution also urged that "we seek to keep open the channels of communication" between nations and that solutions be sought to such conditions of desperate need as racial injustice and world hunger through the sharing of "our knowledge and work ... in the Christian spirit, and with a Christian motivation."

"No problems are simple any more, but call for cooperative understanding and action, and over-all strategy and planning on a world scale", the Congress said.

The statement on cessation of nuclear testing embodied in a separate resolution urged "the nations to dispense with all testing of nuclear weapons, and the production of the same; and cooperatively, to agree on satisfactory methods of inspection designed to ensure that all nations shall exercise good faith in this matter."

In other actions the Congress named as World Alliance president for the next five years Dr. Joao F. Soren of Rio de Janeiro, head of the Brazilian Baptist Convention's Executive Committee and pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rio for the past 26 years.

It elected as Alliance general secretary Dr. Josef Nordenhaug, president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary at Rüschlikon, near Zürich, Switzerland.

At the concluding session held in Rio's massive 155,000 seat Maracana Stadium, an overflow throng joined in worship and heard a sermon by evangelist Billy Graham. The crowd is believed to be the largest ever assembled for a Protestant-sponsored meeting in the predominantly Roman Catholic country.

EPS, Geneva

Finnish Lutheran Church in USA Delays Decision on WCC Membership.

(Virginia, Minnesota) - Postponement for one year of the question of membership in the World Council of Churches was voted by the Suomi Synod or Finnish Evangelical Church at its 71st annual convention here. The delay was voted 199 to 140 after a recommendation from the consistory was presented urging that the 36,000 member church seek immediate membership.

A strong defence of the World Council was made by Archbishop Ilmari Salomies, primate of the National Lutheran Church of Finland.

"I am convinced that the talk about the dangers of Communism in the World Council of Churches is impossible talk", he said.

The Archbishop told the synod that charges that the Council is friendly to Communism were occasioned by the relationships between the Council and churches in communist countries. While acknowledging that spokesmen for some of those churches may sometimes make questionable statements, he emphasized that keeping in contact with the clergy of the Russian churches will help strengthen them.

"The World Council", he said, "provides for them the only possibility of receiving a breath of fresh air and it is a life-giving and strength-giving contact." This is important when Christian brothers are in difficulty, he added. "We Finns know what it means to be alone in difficulty", he said.

Opponents of World Council membership had distributed literature at the meeting. The three bodies with which the Suomi Synod are contemplating merger are already in the Council. These are the American Evangelical, Augustana, and United Lutheran Churches.

A proposal to reconsider the decision to postpone World Council membership discussion until 1961 was introduced after the Archbishop's remarks but it was defeated 177 to 147.

Earlier the Suomi Synod voted to hold a referendum in February 1961, to decide whether the Synod should merge with the three other Lutheran churches. Delegates voted overwhelmingly to give preliminary approval to the constitution of the proposed new church which would be called the Lutheran Church in America.

EPS, Geneva

Dibelius Refutes Anonymous Attacks

(Berlin) - Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin-Brandenburg has sent a circular letter to all clergy in his diocese answering charges of anti-semitism and pro-Nazi activity levelled at him by the anonymous editor of a publication called "Dibelius Speaks".

The collection of "documents", published in East Berlin, aims to show that Bishop Dibelius backed the Nazi regime in the years before World War II.

Writing to his clergy, Bishop Dibelius points out that the Nazi apologist and "philosopher" Alfred Rosenberg had compared him with "Jewish traitors" and "Marxist saboteurs" in 1937 and that this Nazi view of him made nonsense of the charges in "Dibelius Speaks".

The bishop comments on a photograph taken in 1933 and claiming to show him sitting next to Hitler in a Potsdam church. He says the man in the picture is not himself, because he was then a superintendent and would have been wearing a pectoral cross, which is absent in the picture. Bishop Dibelius also says "the face is obviously not mine".

Bishop Dibelius denies a charge that he sponsored a resolution of the 1933 Berlin Synod deploring "foreign propaganda" aiming to make trouble over disorders connected with the Nazi seizure of power. The bishop says he had no part in the Berlin Synod until 1945.

Bishop Dibelius also refers to a Berlin lawsuit in which he was acquitted on charges of defaming one of Hitler's ministers. The editor of "Dibelius Speaks" contrasts the trial's outcome with the conviction of "hundreds of anti-fascists". Dibelius points out that the Nazis regarded his acquittal as a defeat for themselves and that Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels suppressed press reports of the trial. He says the trial of Martin Niemöller, scheduled immediately after his own, was postponed for nine months to give the Nazis more time for "preparation" of the prosecution.

EPS, Geneva

Russian Orthodox Have New Head in Paris

(Paris) - The Diocesan Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in Dispersion in Western Europe has elected Bishop George Tarasoff of Syracuse as successor to the late Metropolitan Vladimir, who died last December.

The election has been approved by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople who has jurisdiction over the Russian Orthodox Church in Dispersion.

The new Metropolitan has had a varied career. Born in 1893 in Russia, he was trained and experienced as a chemical engineer and air pilot before entering the priesthood. He has served the church in Belgium as a priest, and later bishop, and was well known as a critic and opponent of the Hitler occupation during World War II.

A gifted linguist, Metropolitan George celebrates the Eucharist in many languages, including Dutch. EPS, Geneva

In Brief

A total of 1306 refugees from 20 countries moved to new homes in 13 countries during the month of May under World Council of Churches sponsorship. The largest number - 940 - went to the United States. Australia received the second greatest number of newcomers - 241. The May movement brings to a total of 5,282 the number of persons helped to emigrate by the WCC since the beginning of 1960.

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The Roumanian Orthodox Episcopate of America has approved an agreement placing it under the canonical jurisdiction of Metropolitan Leonty of the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America. The arrangement, which does not affect property rights and administration, is designed to "strengthen the oneness of Orthodoxy in America and the unity of the Orthodox faith".

* *

A constitution for the United Church of Christ has been unanimously approved by 600 delegates of the church, formed by a merger in 1957 of the Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed churches. The constitution preserves two forms of church government with a single "statement of faith". It requires final ratification by two-thirds of the local congregations of both constituent denominations.

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Dr. Christian Berg will retire as director of the ecumenical office of Inner Mission and Hilfswerk in the Evangelical Church in Germany, on September 30.

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The producers of the film "Martin Luther", Louis de Rochemont Associates, are making a new film on the life of a parish in East Germany. Entitled "In My Father's House", it is being filmed in the Schleswig-Holstein town of Mölln and is based on a true story. The new film is sponsored by the six US Lutheran churches which made "Martin Luther".

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A second East German conference for about 180 "progressive" pastors and their wives met at Leipzig (DDR) at the end of June. The progressive pastors' federation, which sympathises with the Communist regime, has not been supported by official church leadership in East Germany or by regular local pastors' associations.

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Ecumenical services are being held three times a week in the Protestant church at Oberammergau near the theatre where the passion play is being staged. Worship includes communion and is held in several languages. The church is also open at noon for choral music and meditation.

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The Swedish Ecumenical Council has advocated putting the widespread local "pastoral advice by telephone" on an ecumenical basis. The Council suggests that state Lutheran and free church pastors share the ministry and be chosen on the basis of their ability to help people.

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By a vote of 19 to 8 the Swedish Missionary Council has endorsed the proposed integration of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches. Among opponents of the step were Pentecostal and Baptist churches and the Evangelical National Missionary Society.

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The Polish Ecumenical Council has appointed Superintendent Jan Niewieczermal of the Reformed Church as its president, in succession to Pastor Zygmunt Michelis, a Lutheran, who has been head of the Council since its inception in 1945.

EPS, Geneva

Document

Message from Roman Catholic Bishop
François Charrière, of Lausanne,
Geneva and Fribourg, on the occa-
sion of the First Ecumenical Youth
Assembly in Lausanne, July 13-24,
1960

From July 13 - 24 the Ecumenical Assembly of European Youth will be held at Lausanne. If the Catholic Church does not belong to the World Council of Churches, it nevertheless teaches that all humble and sincere efforts aiming at the reconciliation of all Christians are the work of the Holy Spirit.

Now, the Lausanne Congress gives us two reasons for encouragement. First of all, these are young people, who come together to contribute to Christian unity. When youth is enthusiastic for a great cause we should be wrong to despair for the future.

Moreover the Assembly has chosen "Jesus Christ the Light of the World" as the theme of its work. Thus the participants are centering their studies not on secondary questions, but on the central mystery of Christianity.

For this reason we are taking advantage of the chance offered to us by our separated brethren to ask our own church members, and particularly those who belong to Catholic Action, to put this question also to themselves: Is Jesus Christ really the Light who illuminates our life, personal as well as social?

In addition, all will be united in prayer with this whole body of youth. As we count on the intercession of all our brother Christians for the success of the future Ecumenical Council, in return we desire to commend to the Lord the work of those who, without making profession of our faith, are nevertheless seeking the unity for which Christ prayed.

The Catholic population of Lausanne is asked to attend a mass to be celebrated on Wednesday July 13 at 6:20 p.m. in the Church of Our Lady, to invoke God's blessing on the work of the Assembly.

EPS, Geneva

